

Sabbath Thought:

This week's *Sabbath Thought* is from Dan Dowd. I found it very interesting and I thought you all would as well. It's titled, "***The State of Your Flocks***".

This is a common time of the year when people look back over the last calendar year and consider what they want to do differently in the coming year. For Christians, our examination should not be relegated to one time of the year, but rather a regular part of our walk before God. "How am I doing? - What is the state of my flocks?"

This question comes from a reminder found in Proverbs 27:23 ("Be diligent to know the state of your flocks, And attend to your herds; ", NKJV). Here the reader is encouraged to engage in the harvest of the crops so there is room for the next crop to grow, to tend the sheep to have wool for clothing, and to take care of the goats so there is milk and food for the household.

A principle of this verse is for us to consider the state of our spiritual life as well – so what is the state of our "flocks"? We are familiar with the concept of spiritual self-examination (2 Corinthians 13:5), but Proverbs 27:23 is also a reminder that we are to be regularly assessing whether we are taking care of the important aspects of our spiritual calling. The Young's Literal Translation has Proverbs 27:23 translated this way: "Know well the face of thy flock...." The expression "the face" in the Hebrew has a number of meanings but the concept is to face or to be in front of, or to look at, what we are to be taking care of.

What, then, are the important "aspects" of our calling? They run from the basic to the more involved. Some of the basics are things like obeying the commandments (keeping the Sabbath/Holy Days etc., and the 10 Commandments), regular contact with God (prayer and Bible study) and regular fasting (to stay humble before God and to remember to trust in Him to direct our life). The deeper aspects of "know the state of your flocks, and attend to your herds" are the "softer" items like overcoming (Revelation 2-3 – growing in character [2 Peter 3:18]), living up to the responsibilities in marriage (Ephesians 5), and expressing God's truth through love (Ephesians 4:15).

Along this line, Proverbs 24:27 reminds us to "Put your outdoor work in order and get your fields ready; after that, build your house," (NIV). Before we can effectively do a work, we must first be a work. This verse reminds us that we also need to prioritize, and take care of, the more important aspects of our calling to put them first. This involves things like obedience to God's instruction (John 14:15), applying, and living in, His love (1 John 4:8), serving one another (Galatians 5:13) and forbearing with one another (Colossians 3:13). Prioritizing the things of God also includes doing the things of God before we "build our house" – before we take care of, and do, the physical things of this life.

This Sabbath day is the appropriate time for us to consider the state of our flocks in order to build the house God wants to see in each of us. What is the state of your flocks?

For the Youth - Bible Trivia:

1. When Jesus returns as the conquering King, where is this special title of "King of Kings and Lords of Lords" written?

*Hint: Revelation 19:11-16

2. Besides the Holy bread (Showbread), what unique item was also given to David by the Priest Ahimelech, in the city of Nob?

*Hint: 1 Samuel 21:1-10

3. What was the name of Moses' first born son by Zipporah?

* Hint: Exodus 2:15-22

North Canton Announcements:

- Sabbath Service Time (December 31st): 11:00 AM** - Our normal meeting hall will not be available so the location and service time has been changed. Services will be located at the Holiday Inn - 898 Arlington Ridge E Akron OH 44312

**Please note: No snacks allowed tomorrow. Coffee will be provided.

- Next Sabbath – (January 1st): 2:00 PM**
- Book Discussion Group:** Due to the change in location and time of church services this week, the book discussion group will not be meeting tomorrow. Instead we'll meet next week, January 7th at noon! We will read chapters 9-10 of Finding Jesus in the Old Testament. If you haven't come before and would like to join, all are still welcome to join!
- Zoom Bible Study:** The next scheduled Bible study will take place January 19, 2023 at 7:30 PM
- Kitchen Volunteer Meeting:** There will be a meeting on January 14, 2023 for all kitchen crew members.
- Chili Potluck:** Since we will not be able to have our regular scheduled Potluck on the 28th due to the Marriage Seminar. We will be having a special themed potluck on January 14th. Chili will be provided, please bring sides, salads, drinks, desserts. For more information contact Etta Murry or Sherry Thouvenin.
- Brethren Helping Brethren:** We are all facing some very difficult times and things seem to be getting worse. The young and elderly may be struggling or may struggle moving forward. We would like to reach out to our N Canton Brethren by setting up a table in the back of our fellowship hall for donated non-perishable items. (paper products, cleaning supplies, canned goods etc.) If you would like to participate please bring in your items on January 14th. Depending on items donated and need we will update with the next donation date whether it be monthly or bi-monthly. Please contact Debbie Kuhns with ideas or questions.
- Marriage Seminar Weekend:** Why settle for a good marriage when God gives us the tools to have a great marriage. Marriage is under attack and it's never a waste of time to invest in strengthening this special relationship between a husband and wife. This special weekend will provide the opportunity for our married couples to come together as a family to learn how to protect and develop even more what God has blessed us with. The seminar/activity will take place from Friday evening January 27 to Sunday afternoon January 29th. Location will be the Holiday Inn Boardman, OH. * Please Register for the event.
- Growing in Faith Weekend:** All UCG young adults are invited to join us at the 2023 Growing in the Faith weekend from January 13- 16, 2023 in Stewartville, Minnesota, to discuss how to prepare for a godly marriage. While single, it is the perfect time to learn and grow into the person God wants us to be, even if we haven't met that perfect person yet. Now is the time to be developing the characteristics that will help us have the successful, happy marriages that God wants us to have when that time comes.
In addition to several seminars given by David Schreiber, Ed Dowd and Brian Shaw, we will have plenty of time for fellowship, sledding, games and dancing. This will be a great chance to spend quality time with fellow brothers and sisters in the faith in a positive, uplifting atmosphere. Please register now at growinginthefait.com! Special pricing of \$170 includes all food, lodging, and activities for the weekend. Don't miss out on this special opportunity!
- Young Adult Winter/Ski Retreat:** We are excited to announce a Young Adult winter/ski retreat, President's Day Weekend February 17th-20th, 2023! We are hoping to forge new and deeper relationships with people of like mind. We will be eating and staying together for the whole weekend. We welcome all young adults ages 18–29, single or married.
We will be staying in cabins at Pipestem State Park in Pipestem, West Virginia. Activities will include skiing/snowboarding, sledding, hiking, swimming, bonfire, sports, and lots and lots of

hanging out. More information about the activities can be found on the website. We will also have several interactive discussions and Bible studies. The theme of this weekend will be focused on "how can young adults contribute to the future of the Church of God?"

Registration is open, so go ahead and register on the registration tab at ucgyawinterretreat.org, and we will see you there!

11. Seasons of a Women's Life: The women of the Indianapolis and Fort Wayne congregations invite you to a Women's Enrichment Weekend April 21-23, 2023. We will discuss and learn about the "Seasons of a Woman's Life". Rooms have been reserved at a local hotel and we will host a welcome reception there on Friday evening. On Saturday and Sunday, ladies will meet at the Indianapolis church building for a fun weekend of learning, fellowship, and music. Prices and registration information will be coming out in January. You may contact Lizzy Creech at liz.creech06@yahoo.com with any questions.

If I've overlooked anything, Please let me know ASAP.